

Speaker: Stefan Duerksen, Lead Pastor

TITLE Intro: Because of MISUSE & LACK OF TEACHING... many Christians today are like that sailboat stranded at sea... **NEEDS:** they feel God is distant, stagnant in their walk, anxious and stuck, trapped by sinful bondages, broken relationships, lack boldness for witness, prayer is dry, sickness, a hard diagnosis, alone, devastated...

They **NEED:** the Fruit of the Spirit! Christlike Character! To be Reformed Relationally! Set Free from SIN! Strengthened to Endure Suffering! **HOPE!** Boldness! They need a **WORD FROM GOD!** Healing! Inner and outer! Deliverance!

They NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT & HIS GRACE GIFTS!!! His CHARISMATA!

Last week: I meant to bring us through a brief history of Spiritual Gifts in the Church from the completion of Scripture until NOW. DID NOT WORK.

We spent time qualifying this statement. P. Stefan, "Scripture isn't everything, but everything should be built on a foundation of Scripture."

Theology: Knowing God, Truth, Right Doctrine, Ethics, Beliefs

1. **The Foundation: Scripture:** The primary, sufficient, inerrant, and foundational authority.
2. **Pillar 1: Tradition:** Tradition provides the historical context of the Church. This includes the writings of the early Church fathers, the creeds, and the collective wisdom of past generations and current generations. It ensures that modern interpretations are grounded in a heritage that has stood the test of time, preventing "theological reinventing of the wheel."
3. **Pillar 2: Reason:** Reason is the intellectual faculty used to process and understand revelation. Faith and logic are not enemies; rather, God gave us the ability to think critically, organize thoughts, and apply evidence to our beliefs. Faith should be rational, not superstitious.
4. **Pillar 3: Experience:** This refers to the lived reality of the individual and the community. It is the "internal evidence" of God's work—how a person's heart and life are transformed by grace. Experience can validate the truths found in scripture, turning abstract doctrine into personal reality.

Why do I believe what I believe? Because of my experiences? Upbringing? School? Culture? Or, SCRIPTURE.

This is the point – Scripture is the ONE true foundation.

If Scripture forbids, it is forbidden. IF Scripture says it is true, it is. Of course, Scripture does not talk about everything you will encounter directly – we can use other pillars to discover truth. Even there, Scripture will teach, correct, guide, and direct our hearts to **TRUST** God in **ALL** circumstances.

Sermon Title: Part 12: Church History (Tradition) & Spiritual Gifts

REMEMBER: I said many in the Church are rejecting the gifts. Why? Because of **MISUSE & ABUSE.**

A. Scripture: Spiritual Gifts are Required Until Christ Returns

1 Corinthians 12:27–13:10 (ESV) ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets?

Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. ¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

- **Who is this written to?** The Church at Corinth.
- **What does it say?** Spiritual Gifts were given to the Church.
- **Does it give a timeline?** Yes. From their current time → Christ returns (Perfect)
- **Was it Prescriptive? Descriptive?** Prescriptive. Nothing in the text reveals that it was written to an individual for a specific time.
- **Important Point:** Spiritual Gifts WITHOUT Love are meaningless!

B. Tradition: The Spiritual Gifts in Church History

What does history have to show us regarding spiritual gifts? E.g. I recently saw a clip of an Alissa Childers podcast where the scholar Sam Waldron claimed that the Holy Spirit and the gifts were a NEW thing, that from the completion of the Bible until the Enlightenment, orthodoxy taught the sign gifts were gone. He went on to claim that “**Westerners, obsessed with experience, have really championed this more recently to the detriment of the Church.**” (paraphrase)

TRUE? No. The belief in the Spirit & gifts is a global phenomenon grounded in Scripture & history, which is why we shouldn't be surprised that almost all the fastest-growing churches & missions worldwide share this belief.

The Patristic Era (A.D. 100-600): This is the period immediately following the Completion of the Canon of Scripture.

During the first three to four centuries of Christianity, ministering through the Spirit's miraculous charisms remained part of ordinary life.

- Before the 300's, exorcisms proved to be a major factor in the spread of Christianity (*Christianizing the Roman Empire*, Ramsay MacMullen, 40-41, 60-61. Cf. *The Next Christendom*, Philip Jenkins, 54)
- In the 300s, exorcisms and miracles were the most explicit cause of conversion to Christianity mentioned in early Christian sources (*Christianizing*, MacMullen, p. 61-62)

The Didache - prophecy, apostles, etc. is an early 2nd century document, was written to ministers. It exhorted the church to “permit the prophets to give thanks as much as they desire” and then proceeded to instruct how prophetic utterances were to be tested.

The Shepherd of Hermas – prophecy, etc. (AD 90-150), says, “How then, sir, will a man know which of them is a prophet?”

Justin Martyr – prophecy, healing, deliverance, etc. (A.D. 100-165) wrote, “For the prophetic gifts remain with us even to the present time” and “now it is possible to see among us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God.” (*Dialogue with Trypho*, Coxe 1:240) *About the power gifts, he said, “And now you can learn this from your own observation. For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city, many of our Christian men exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men. However, all the other exorcists could not cure them, and those who used incantations and drugs”* (*Second Apology of Justin*, Coxe 6:190).

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons – gifts, miracles, deliverance, visions, prophecy, healing, tongues, dead being raised, etc. (A.D. 130-202) wrote, “It is impossible to number the gifts which the church throughout the world has received from God in the name of Jesus Christ ... Those who are in truth Jesus’ disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform miracles, to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe in Christ, and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised, and remained among us for many years” (*Against Heresies*, 2:32:4). “In like manner we do hear many brethren in the Church who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God...” (5:6:1).

Ignatius of Antioch – gifts of Spirit prophecy, words of knowledge, etc. (martyred around AD 117), assumes the same. Writing to the church at Smyrna, he greets them as having “obtained every kind of gift” and being “filled with faith and love, and... deficient in no gift.” When addressing the church in Philadelphia, he recalls a moment when he spoke prophetically to their situation: “For, when I was among you, I cried, I spoke with a loud voice: Give heed to the bishop, and to the presbytery and deacons. Now, some suspected me of having spoken thus, as knowing beforehand the division caused by some among you. But He is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I got no intelligence from any man. But the Spirit proclaimed these words: Do nothing without the bishop; keep your bodies as the temples of God; love unity; avoid divisions; be the followers of Jesus Christ, even as He is of His Father.”

Tertullian – gifts, deliverance, healing, etc. (A.D. 150-220), who loved the Holy Spirit, urged new disciples to seek after spiritual gifts earnestly. “Therefore, my blessed ones, whom the grace of God awaits, when you ascend from the most sacred font of your new birth [baptism], and spread your hands for the first time in the house of your mother [the Church], together with your brethren, ask from the Father, ask from the Lord, that His own specialties of grace and distributions of gifts may be supplied you. “Ask,” says He, “and you shall receive.” Well, you have asked, and have received; you have knocked, and it has been opened to you. Only, I pray that, when you are asking, you be mindful likewise of Tertullian the sinner.” (*On Baptism*, 20) “All this might be officially brought under your notice, and by the very advocates, who are themselves also under obligations to us, although in court they give their voice as it suits them. The clerk of one of them, who was liable to be thrown upon the ground by an evil spirit, was set free from his affliction, and was also the relative of another, and the little boy of a third. How many men of rank (to say nothing of common people) have been delivered from devils, and healed of diseases! Even Severus himself, the father of Antonine, was graciously mindful of the Christians; for he sought out the Christian Proculus, named Torpacion, the steward of Euhodias, and in gratitude for his having once cured him by anointing, he kept him in his palace till the day of his death (Coxe 3:107).

Clement of Alexandria – ALL spiritual gifts, etc. (AD 215) spoke explicitly of the operation in his day of those spiritual gifts listed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:7–10. (Storms, Sam. *Understanding Spiritual Gifts: A Comprehensive Guide*, p. 134)

Hippolytus – deliverance, etc. (AD 236) set forth guidelines for the exercise of deliverance ministry, insisting that “if there is someone who has a demon, such a one shall not hear the Word of the teacher until purified.” (Storms, Sam. *Understanding Spiritual Gifts* p. 135)

Pachomius – tongues, miracles, etc. (AD 292–346), was known to perform miracles and empowered to converse “in languages he did not know.” (Storms, Sam. *Understanding Spiritual Gifts: A Comprehensive Guide*, p. 136)

Origen – gifts, word of wisdom & knowledge, (A.D. 185-254) warned against the misuse of spiritual gifts. In his book, *On First Principles*, he thundered, “When, whether by baptism or by the grace of the Spirit, the word of wisdom or the word of knowledge or of any other gift has been bestowed upon a man, and not rightly administered, i.e. either buried in the earth or tied up in a napkin, the gift of the Spirit will certainly be withdrawn from his soul, and the other portion which remains, that is, the substance of the soul, will be assigned its place with unbelievers, being divided and separated from that Spirit with whom, by joining himself to the Lord, it ought to have been one spirit.” (2:10:7).

Gregory Thaumaturgus – Prophecy, interpretation, signs & wonders, miracles, healings, deliverance, etc. (A.D. 213-270) became his student, teaching him to think critically about philosophy, physics, and ethics. But Gregory also praised him as one who mediated him through divine charisma, speaking as those who prophesy and interpret mystical and divine words. (Oration and Panegyric addressed to Origen, 6:36) –, one of Christianity’s Eastern Church Fathers, returned to his native Neocaesarea, following his schooling under Origen. According to his follower, Gregory Nyssa, there were but 17 Christians in Neocaesarea. However, when Gregory the “Wonder-worker” died 40 years later, there were only 17 in Neocaesarea who were NOT Christians! (*Life of Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus in Patrologiae cursus completus*, ed. J. P. Migne, pp. 893-958) How were so many converted under his ministry? The following four Church Fathers speak to this question.

- **Basil of Cappadocia**, who believed that these gifts were still in operation, wrote of Gregory the Wonderworker (*On the Holy Spirit*, 8:46-47). **Gregory of Nyssa** wrote an essay (*Life of Saint Gregory*). **Socrates**, the fourth-century historian, reports that pagans were no less attracted to the Christian faith by his marvellous acts than by his words. He reports many miracles, healing of the sick, and the casting out of devils, even by means of his letters. (*Ecclesiastical History*, 2:111-112). **Jerome** says that Gregory’s writings were overshadowed by the signs and wonders which accompanied his evangelism. (*Lives of Illustrious Men*, 3:376)

Novatian – tongues, powers, healings, discernment of spirits, etc. (A.D. 201-258) testified, “This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, often discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of charismata; and thus make the Lord’s Church everywhere, and in all, perfected and completed.” (*On the Trinity*, Coxe 5:641).

Hilarion the Great – signs & wonders, etc. (A.D. 291-371) **Jerome** says of Hilarion’s life, “There would not be time if I wanted to tell you all the signs and wonders performed by Hilarion....” (*Life of Saint Hilarion*, 15:262-263)

Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers – words of knowledge, healing, miracles, prophecy, tongues, interpretation, etc. (A.D. 300-368), speaking of spiritual gifts said, “These gifts enter us like a gentle rain, and having done so, little by little bring forth fruit in abundance. When this gentle rain falls, the earth rejoices. But the rains that are multiplied so that [at first] there are small streams; the streams [then] become raging waters, so that they become mighty rivers ... when the words of life are spoken; or when there is understanding of divine knowledge; when by faith we stand inside the Gospel; when healings and miracles are performed; when by prophecy we are taught of God; when spirits, holy and evil, are discerned, when sermons in foreign languages are signs that the Holy Spirit is active; when interpretation makes intelligible sermons in foreign languages. In all these gifts, the Holy Spirit is manifested in concrete efforts. If the gifts are effective and profitable, let us make use of them. We are inundated with the gifts of the Spirit. That fountain of life, which is the river of God, spills over in us ... among us there is no one who, from time to time, does not feel the gift of the grace of the Spirit.” (*On the Trinity*, 8:29-33)

Cyril of Jerusalem - prophecy, tongues, wisdom, deliverance, interpretation (A.D. 313-386) wrote, “If you believe, you shall not only receive remission of sins, but also do things which pass man’s power. And may you be worthy of the gift of prophecy also! [...] All your life long will your Guardian the Comforter abide with you; He will care for you, as for His own soldier; for your goings out, and your comings in, and your plotting foes. And He will give you gifts of grace of every kind, if you grieve Him not by sin [...] Be ready to receive grace, and when you have received it, cast it not away.” (*Catechetical Lectures*, 17:37) 386) wrote often of the gifts in his day: “For He [the Holy Spirit] employs the tongue of one man for wisdom; the soul of another He enlightens by prophecy, to another He gives power to drive away devils, to another he gives to interpret the divine Scriptures.”

Basil of Cappadocia – discernment of spirits, healing, prophecy, miracles, etc. (A.D. 330-379) was perhaps more concerned with things of the Spirit than any other Church Father. He provided Eastern Christianity’s most articulate and powerful description of the Holy Spirit. He believed that those who exercised leadership and care must be spiritual seniors with the gifts of discerning of spirits, healing the sick, and foretelling the future (prophetic gifting). He wrote, “The Spirit is present in prophecy, healings, and other wonderful works, all of which are still to be found.” (*On the Holy Spirit*, 26:61)

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan – healing, tongues, etc. (A.D. 339-397), stated that God was still giving healings and tongues in his day. “Behold, the Father established the teachers; Christ also established them in the churches; and just as the Father give the grace of healings, so the Son also gives it; just as the Father gives the gift of tongues, so the Son also has bestowed it.” (*The Holy Spirit (Fathers of the Church)*, Deferrari 44:150)

Augustine of Hippo – FIRST DENIED GIFTS – later recanted – too many healings & miracles to count! Dead raised, miracles, healings, etc. (A.D. 350-430) was the most influential Church Father in the West. In his early ministry, he was skeptical of the charismata, but by the time he wrote *The City of God*, miracles were a part of his own experience. In this work he reports, “Even now ... many miracles are wrought, the same God who wrought those we read of still performing them, by whom He will and as He will ...” (*City of God*, 2:490) In Book 22 he tells how he changed his mind, “once I realized how many miracles were occurring in our own day ... It is only two years ago that the keeping of records was begun here in Hippo, and already, at this writing, we have nearly seventy attested miracles.” Again, he declared, “We cannot listen to those who maintain that the invisible God works no visible miracles ... God, who made the visible heaven and earth, does not disdain to work visible miracles in heaven or earth, that he may thereby awaken the soul which is immersed in things visible to worship him, the invisible.” (2:188-189) In chapter 24 of Book 22, Augustine listed miracles that happened (*City of God*, Deferrari 24:431-

433). The miracles recorded in this chapter include healings from blindness, breast cancer, gout, paralysis, a scrotal hernia, diseases caused by demons, the resuscitation of several people, and the raising of a couple of people from the dead, including one who was the son of Augustine's friend. Augustine was even an eyewitness in the healing of a friend, a former official named Innocent, who suffered from a long-term painful anal abscess that a previous surgery and ointments had failed to correct. Augustine and others prayed for this man who wailed in agony. The next morning, Augustine and the others returned for the surgery, which would be performed without anesthesia, but when the doctors removed the bandages, the abscess was completely healed (22:8)

St. Patrick – dreams, visions, word of knowledge, etc. (A.D. 389-461) When the Irish raided British settlements under Roman control, they abducted a 16-year-old boy, Patrick, and brought him back to Ireland as a slave. He prayed and fasted a great deal during this time. He wrote, "... one night in my sleep, I heard a voice saying to me: 'You do well to fast. Soon you will depart for your home country.' And again, a very short time later, there was a voice prophesying: 'Behold, your ship is ready.'" Fleeing his master, Patrick travelled to a port some two hundred miles away. He wrote, "I came, but the power of God who directed my route to advantage (and I was afraid of nothing) until I reached that ship." (*Confessions of St. Patrick, Ch. 3, pp. 16-18*) In Britain, he became a bishop and then had another vision. This time, he saw a man coming to him from Ireland carrying letters that all seemed to cry out to him in one voice, saying, "We appeal to you, holy servant boy, to come and walk among us." (ch. 19). He returned to Ireland and converted thousands. Such visions often led him.

Gregory the Great – miracles, deliverance, prophecy, etc. (A.D. 540-604), the last of the traditional Latin "Doctors of the Church," wrote *Four Books of Dialogue of the Life and Miracles of the Italian Fathers and on the Immortality of the Soul*. The work was composed to record miracles performed by Italian saints in their own time. He understood that just as miracles had been necessary in the Early Church to accomplish the work of evangelism, so too he believed they were necessary in his own time for the conversion of pagans and to deepen believers' faith. (*Homiliae in Evangelia*, J.P. Migne p. 76) While miracles did not mark his own ministry, he recorded some 200 that were performed by others, and, to bolster credibility, he included the names of the sources for all but 19 of these miracle stories. (*Dialogues*) In his *Homilies on Ezechiel*, he insists that miracles as striking as any reported in Scripture are being performed: "Now, generally, we see holy men do wonderful things, perform many miracles, cleanse lepers, cast out demons, dispel bodily sicknesses by touch, predict things to come by the spirit of prophecy." (pp. 244-245)

Claim: Spiritual gifts ceased after the Bible was taught & believed throughout history – FALSE.

Ligon Duncan & Tom Schreiner – reputable cessationists' response to the above – "theologians of the patristic period spoke often of the presence and operation of all spiritual gifts, none of them claimed to have such gifts themselves." (Storms, Sam. *Understanding Spiritual Gifts: A Comprehensive Guide*, p. 141) **ARGUMENT FROM SILENCE → Not Scripture or Tradition. (AND Augustine & Ignatius DID record personal experience.)**

The Spiritual Gifts DECREASED after AD 300: Cyprian of Carthage – Gifts could only be used by Bishops, etc. (AD 210–258), whom historians often identify as the pivotal figure who most formally linked the operation of the Holy Spirit to the office of the bishop.

- **NOTE:** After the Edict of Milan, there was a "professionalization" of ministry, which stifled "every-member" or "everyone a minister" as we see in 1 Cor 12 & Rom 12.

NOTE: Further to this. Matthew 13:58 & 17:19-20 demonstrate that unbelief can be a contributing cause to a lack of the supernatural and miracles.

IMPORTANT: The early Church believed in and practiced ALL of the Spiritual Gifts: tongues (spiritual & physical language), discernment, miracles, signs & wonders, words of knowledge & wisdom, prophecy, deliverance, and even saw the dead raised back to life.

Colson – “Ideas have consequences, bad ideas have victims.”

Belief in Spiritual Gifts is: (1) Biblical – they are part of the foundation; (2) supported by Church Tradition – taught & practiced; (3) supported by Reason – the Biblical purposes for gifts still apply today; (4) supported by the individual & collective Experience of the Church throughout history – AND by our own experience, teaching, and practices at Southland Church.

C. Experience: Do YOU have needs today?

What are your needs?

- Stuck in a sinful bondage?
- Broken relationships, abuse, hurts, offences, etc.?
- Anxiety, depression, hopelessness, etc.?
- Sickness, health issues, injuries, etc.?
- Boldness and courage for witness?

You NEED the SPIRIT & His Charismata (Gifts of GRACE): Spiritual strength, healing inner and outer, peace, deliverance, restoration, Christlike character! YOU NEED WIND IN YOUR SAILS! You need the HOLY SPIRIT AND ALL OF HIS GIFTS!

Shake off the shackles of unbelief – bad teaching – and other people's misuses AND come to the Spirit for HELP! In your TIME OF NEED!

MODIFIED PRAYER: (Acts 4:24–31) “Sovereign Lord, you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David, the Prophets, and the Apostles. Now, Lord, consider the days we live in, the struggles we face, the weakness inherent in us, and grant us Your Spirit to empower us to minister, break free from sin, persevere through hardship, and speak Your word with great boldness. While you stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”